

## [Glenn Kanipe]

September 29, 1939

Glenn Kanipe (Textile worker)

Kannapolis, N. C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Lila J. Bruguiera, Reviser Original Names: Changed Names:

Glenn Kanipe Brent Cochrane

Della Kanipe Stella Cochrane

Pauline Kanipe Kathryn Cochrane

Cannon Bernard

Charlotte Queenstown

Morganton Overton

Kannapolis Bernardsville [???

A pretty white bungalow of six rooms stood on top of a low hill. In front of the house a broad lawn, smoothly cut and studded with fine old oak trees, sloped gently down to where a little stream found its way through the green turf. Everywhere about the grounds there was a look of care and order.

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Brent sat leaning against a tree as he talked. "Well, my story is nothing to be proud of. I'd rather forget it myself. I was born in Medford County. Benton is my home town. I went to the graded school there but when I was sixteen I left home. I could have finished school and it grieved my parents terrible that I didn't." Brent sighed. "I never realized they would take my going away so hard. But I was young and dissatisfied and wanted to ramble. We were living on the farm at the time but father had a job in town. He wouldn't give his consent for me to leave so I packed my clothes and went away one night while the family slept.

"The night I left home I had two dollars in my pocket. I bought a ticket to Stokesboro. It took about all I had to get there and I began to look for work right away. My first job was in the Mount Auburn Cotton Mills. Jobs was easy to get then. The mill run regular and they put me to doffing. I worked twelve hours a day. Lord, how my back hurt! I was too tired by night time to be restless. Going 2 back home was out of the question and I was too proud to write for money.

"I was making \$1.75 a day. After I had worked for four months my wages was raised to \$2.25. In all that time I didn't write home. Of course my parents found out where I was but they didn't write either or try to get me to come back. Four months is a long time when you've not been used to work. Its longer when you don't make much and have little to spend. Out of my small wages I finally saved \$100.00 and had enough money to quit. I worked a notice. When it was up I drawed out my back time and left for Chicago.

"I got work in a cafe there. The board was good but the wages was low. Twelve hours is too long to work for \$2.00 a day but I stuck it out for two months. During that time a fellow named Tom Brice and I had become good friends. We decided to leave for Texas. We bummed part of the way and found work on the sheep ranches there. When we got tired of a place we moved on.

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"Two years later I came home on a visit. My folks begged me to settle down. They wanted me to go back to school. To please them I looked around and got me a job. In a few weeks I was restless as ever but I toughed it out for six months. This time I didn't run away. I had no idea where I was going. On the way to the depot I decided to head for Ohio. I had 3 been there during my travels and liked it. I bought a ticket for Dayton.

"I got a job there in a airplane factory. That was during the World War. In a few weeks I was making ten dollars a day. Dayton's a fine place. I liked it and stayed there till the War ended. I'd saved some money and might have stayed longer if I hadn't got a telegram from home saying my parents and the whole family had the flu. People had been dying by the hundreds with it in Dayton. They had to take a steam shovel to dig the graves. But all this didn't make much impression on me until I got that telegram from home. I was scared. At last I realized what my family meant to me.

"I had heard in Dayton that whiskey was the best medicine for the flu. Buying a half gallon of the best I could get I took the next train home. Prohibition was in force then and I had to hide the whiskey in my bags. They searched them after I crossed the state line but they didn't find it. I don't guess they tried. I found the family getting on fine except my father. His life was despaired of. I nursed him—stayed by his bed for weeks. He pulled through and I promised myself never again would I do anything to worry him. After the danger was past and his recovery sure I got me a job in a cotton mill. Doffing was the only experience I'd had in 4 a mill so Tom Stacy, the boss, put me on as head doffer at two dollars a day. Two dollars ain't much when you're used to making ten but I'll always be glad that I took that job because there's where I met my wife.

"You'll pardon my being personal. I can't tell this story unless I speak of Stella. I'd been in every state in the Union, met all kinds of girls and I had to come back to Benton to find the one I wanted working in a cotton mill." Brent eased himself down against the tree

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and stretched out comfortably. Over head oak leaves rustled in the breeze. The warm September sun shone through them and made a lacy pattern on the grass.

“The first evening I went to work I glanced up from the frame I was doffing and saw a slender girl standing at the head of it. She had on a blue linen dress trimmed with white buttons. Her blond hair caught up in the back looked old fashioned. Little curls had escaped from the knot and made a frame for her face with its soft blue eyes and fair skin. It takes more than a pretty face to make a girl attractive. She's got to have character and refinement. At least that's the way I feel. When you find a combination of these things you've got something rare. Thats how it was with Stella.

We were married twelve months later. The day I was married I borrowed ten dollars. We never went on a honeymoon. I didn't have the money. Stella had a few hundred dollars 5 but I refused to let her spend it. Nine months after we were married our daughter was born. We called her Katharine.

“Now that I had a family I had to make more money and we moved to Bernardsville. I got a job in the Bernard Mills as head doffer. My wages at that time was \$2.50 a day. Six months later I was making \$5.00. We rented a three room house. It had lights and water and the lawn was so pretty. That house was a paradise. When it comes to making a home attractive Stella knows how to do it. We had everything we wanted.

Stella insisted on getting her a job. Katharine was two years old and we paid my mother-in-law \$7.50 every two weeks to keep her. That didn't include her food. We both worked at night, bringing Katharine home for the week ends. She was well taken care of. I like to think now that my child was never denied anything she needed for comfort and happiness. I worked hard and all the time I was planning to get something laid by.

“If you buy 10 shares in the Building and Loan at 25 cents a share the 10 shares matures in six years and you have one thousand dollars. They give you the interest which amounts

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to a whole lot. Ten shares is \$2.50 a week. I bought sixty shares and paid \$15.00 a week. We lived good, had anything we wanted and a small bank account.

6

"When my stock matured I had \$8,000 dollars and I bought this piece of ground. It's a mile from town but you can't buy in town any more. The Bernards own everything and I didn't want to live in town anyway. My ancestors were farmers and I guess there's a little of the farmer in me. I'd starve trying to make a living off a farm but I like to potter around and do things. I bought twenty two acres here on this side of the road for \$2,200. I built my home for \$4000 and had some money left over out of my \$8000. We been living here six years. Two years ago I got a piece of ground across the road there and put up that little bungalow. Paid cash for all of it. I'd planned to build a few more houses for rent but my ambition is gone now.

Brent's voice grew husky. He turned his head away quickly to hide his emotion. I waited for him to speak. "We've come to the part of my story that's hard for me to talk about but I'll tell you about it. Maybe it will help. When Katharine was born we knew there couldn't be any more children. Of course we was wrapped up in her. We gave her every advantage. The year she was fifteen, (that will be two years next spring) she fell one day while playing base ball. That night at supper she told us about it but insisted she wasn't hurt. It amused her that I wanted to take her to a 7 doctor. Two months later she began to complain and I took her to Queenstown to consult a specialist. He said her spine was injured and advised an operation. The operation was successful and she got well.

"One day, six months afterwards, she took a new automobile I had bought and went to town. She'd never driven before and she wrecked the car on Main Street. A crowd gathered and she was questioned but she didn't know her name and couldn't tell who her parents were. Some one recognized her and came to find me. I took her to Queenstown at once but the doctor there didn't know what was wrong. I pleaded with them to do something and they told me to try Kings Hospital. She stayed there for weeks but her

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mental condition showed no improvement. I begged them to tell me some other hospital I might take her to but they said it was no use. They suggested the State Hospital for the Insane at Overton. They thought the treatment there might be of some help. She is there now. We bring her home occasionally. When she gets worse I take her back. I am going to take her to Johns Hopkins soon. Maybe it won't do any good but I just got to keep on trying."

Brent was silent for a moment. Suddenly he got up. "Come on. Lets walk about a little. I want to show you the place. I've got some fine hogs up there in the woods. We keep one cow, though we could buy our milk cheaper but I want a cow 8 to tend to. My hobby is animals and things I can look after. I've got a lot of chickens too. Stella knew you were coming and she's baking your favorite cake and frying chicken for dinner." Stella came out to join us. She looked pretty in her rose print dress and white apron. The dinner was delicious and both Brent and Stella seemed cheerful. No one spoke of the daughter's absence.

Brent talked of his work. "I've been in Bernardsville sixteen years. When I moved here I didn't have ten dollars. I've been promoted from a doffer boy, the poorest job in the mill, to overseer of the spinning room. There's only one thing I don't like about my job." Stella smiled.

"Brent can't get used to staying dressed up. The position of overseer requires him to dress nice. I think it will kill him yet. As soon as he gets home he puts on his overalls."

"I like to be clean and neat but I hate to feel like I was ready for church all the time," Brent explained. "Come on. I want you to see my hogs."

We walked across the lawn to a wooded section of the grounds where six large hogs were penned in a lot.

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"I'll sell them all except a few hams for our own use. We get tired of home cured meat. It's fun raising them but the profit is not much."

9

A Jersey cow came to the gate.

"That's Pet" said Brent feeling in his pocket for a lump of sugar. I hire a man to sow clover and pea hay just for her."

"Lets go to a show. I like a good show. We go often. I want you to see our new theatre in North Bernardsville.

"I'll have to dress" said Stella. "You will too Brent."

"Oh, I'm good enough to go to the show."

"Now look here Brent you're going to dress or we don't go to the show."

"Oh all right, Honey. Anything to please the ladies."

"Brent should have been a farmer. They can't afford any clothes."

Brent laughed as Stella disappeared into the bed-room.

"I like to tease her. I intended all the time to change my clothes. Bernardsville in a great town for the working man to live in. You sure can get rid of your money here if you have the spending habit. The Bernards have everything here to get the money back they pay you. But money is not wasted on recreation. We go to the shows and the ball games. In winter I hunt a lot. We like to visit our neighbors and friends. Every two weeks we go to Overton and take Katharine out shopping and to dinner. My chief object in life is trying to find some way to give her pleasure."